

The History of Civilization
Edited by C. K. OGDEN, M.A.

The Life of Buddha
as Legend and History

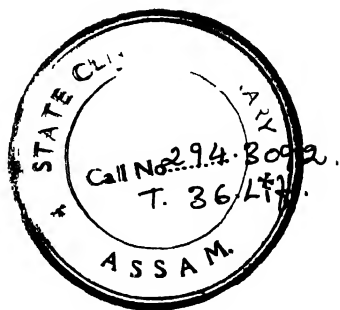
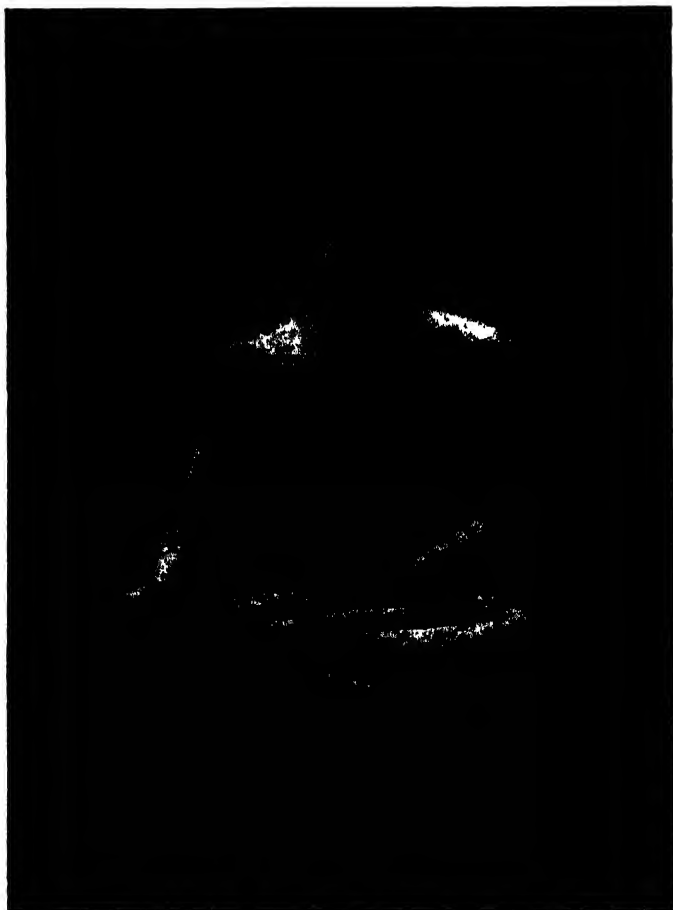


PLATE I



THE ENLIGHTENMENT

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The Life of Buddha

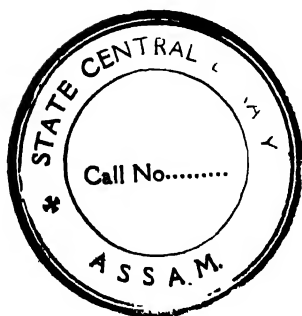
as Legend and History

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PREFACE

SINCE the appearance of the epoch-making works of Rhys Davids, Kern, and Oldenberg, the sources for the history of Buddha and Buddhism have been greatly increased. The accessions to our knowledge of the Pāli texts are indeed chiefly due to Rhys Davids, but these new data have never been incorporated with previous results, nor has an estimate been made of the extent to which they modify earlier conclusions.

The present work attempts to set forth what is known from the records, and to utilise information that has never yet been presented in a Western form. Even now much of the material is accessible only in works published in Burma, Siam, and Ceylon, but the great work begun by Rhys Davids in establishing the Pali Text Society is still vivified by his spirit, and continues in the fruitful labours of his successors. Not the least of his achievements is the Pali Text Society's Dictionary, now completed by Dr. W. Stede. All the Pāli passages quoted in the course of this work have been either translated or retranslated by me in the light of the evidence accumulated by these scholars.

There has been a tendency in Germany and England to depend almost entirely on the Pāli sources, neglecting the works of schools preserved in Sanskrit, and in Tibetan and Chinese translations from the Sanskrit, which although often later than the Pāli, yet are parallel and more or less independent traditions, and cannot safely be ignored. The Pāli itself is no primitive record, but the growth of a long tradition in one school. The Sanskrit needs to be equally closely analysed; and if the result tends to show the historical weakness of a narrative based on one set of records, the final conclusions are all the more reliable.